2014

Progressive Education in Context, I-IV

Bank Street School for Children

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Introduction

This booklet contains some current articles that highlight aspects of the educational vision, mission, and values of the Bank Street School for Children. Each article shares a perspective of education that is reflected in the classrooms of the school.

- The first article, *Progressive Education,* written by a well known educator, Alfie Kohn, highlights and describes the form and function of progressive education.
- The second article, *The Fall and Rise of the 8th Grade School*, was written by Stan Brimberg, the Division Coordinator of the Upper School, for the *Parents League Review*.
- Finally, the third article, *No Ordinary Field Trip,* was written by Sam Brian, one of the 13/14s (8th Grade) teachers after the traditional 8th Grade trip to Washington, D.C. this spring.

We hope that you find these articles not only interesting and informative, but also pleasurable to read.

Progressive Education
Why It's Hard to Beat, But Also Hard to Find

By Alfie Kohn

If progressive education doesn't lend itself to a single fixed definition, that seems fitting in light of its reputation for resisting conformity and standardization. Any two educators who describe themselves as sympathetic to this tradition may well see it differently, or at least disagree about which features are the most important.

Talk to enough progressive educators, in fact, and you'll begin to notice certain paradoxes: Some people focus on the unique needs of individual students, while others invoke the importance of a community of learners; some describe learning as a process, more journey than destination, while others believe that tasks should result in authentic products that can be shared.[1]

What It Is

Despite such variations, there are enough elements on which most of us can agree so that a common core of progressive education emerges, however hazily. And it really does make sense to call it a tradition, as I did a moment ago. Ironically, what we usually call "traditional" education, in contrast to the progressive approach, has less claim to that adjective—because of how, and how recently, it has developed. As Jim Nehring at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell observed, "Progressive schools are the legacy of a long and proud tradition of thoughtful school practice stretching back for centuries"—including hands-on learning, multiage classrooms, and mentor-apprentice relationships—while what we generally refer to as traditional schooling "is largely the result of outdated policy changes that have calcified into conventions."[2] (Nevertheless, I'll use the conventional nomenclature in this article to avoid confusion.)

It's not all or nothing, to be sure. I don't think I've ever seen a school—even one with scripted instruction, uniforms, and rows of desks bolted to the floor—that has completely escaped the influence of progressive ideas. Nor have I seen a school that's progressive in every detail. Still, schools can be characterized according to how closely they reflect a commitment to values such as these:

Attending to the whole child: Progressive educators are concerned with helping children become not only good learners but also good people. Schooling isn't seen as being about just academics, nor is intellectual growth limited to verbal and mathematical proficiencies.

Community: Learning isn't something that happens to individual children—separate selves at separate desks. Children learn with and from one another in a caring community, and that's true of moral as well as academic learning. Interdependence counts at least as much as independence, so it follows that practices that pit students against one another in some kind of competition, thereby undermining a feeling of community, are deliberately avoided.

Collaboration: Progressive schools are characterized by what I like to call a "working with" rather than a "doing to" model. In place of rewards for complying with the adults' expectations, or punitive consequences for failing to do so, there's more of an emphasis on collaborative problem-solving—and, for that matter, less focus on behaviors than on underlying motives, values, and reasons.

Social justice: A sense of community and responsibility for others isn't confined to the classroom; indeed, students are helped to locate themselves in widening circles of care that extend beyond self, beyond friends, beyond their own ethnic group, and beyond their own country. Opportunities are offered not only to learn about, but also to put into action, a commitment to diversity and to improving the lives of others.

Intrinsic motivation: When considering (or reconsidering) educational policies and practices, the first question that progressive educators are likely to ask is, "What's the effect on students' interest in learning, their desire to continue reading, thinking, and questioning?" This deceptively simple test helps to determine what students will and won't be asked to do. Thus, conventional practices, including homework, grades, and tests, prove difficult to justify for anyone who is serious about promoting long-term dispositions rather than just improving short-term skills.

Deep understanding: As the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead declared long ago, "A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth." Facts and skills do matter, but only in a context and for a purpose. That's why progressive education tends to be organized around problems, projects, and questions—rather than around lists of facts, skills, and separate disciplines. The teaching is typically interdisciplinary, the assessment rarely focuses on rote memorization, and excellence isn't confused with "rigor." The point is not merely to challenge students—after all, harder is not necessarily better—but to invite them to think deeply about issues that matter and help them understand ideas from the inside out.

Active learning: In progressive schools, students play a vital role in helping to design the curriculum, formulate the questions, seek out (and create) answers, think through possibilities, and evaluate how successful they—and their teachers—have

been. Their active participation in every stage of the process is consistent with the overwhelming consensus of experts that learning is a matter of constructing ideas rather than passively absorbing information or practicing skills.

Taking kids seriously: In traditional schooling, as John Dewey once remarked, "the center of gravity is outside the child": he or she is expected to adjust to the school's rules and curriculum. Progressive educators take their cue from the children—and are particularly attentive to differences among them. (Each student is unique, so a single set of policies, expectations, or assignments would be as counterproductive as it was disrespectful.) The curriculum isn't just based on interest, but on these children's interests. Naturally, teachers will have broadly conceived themes and objectives in mind, but they don't just design a course of study for their students; they design it with them, and they welcome unexpected detours. One fourth-grade teacher's curriculum, therefore, won't be the same as that of the teacher next door, nor will her curriculum be the same this year as it was for the children she taught last year. It's not enough to offer elaborate thematic units prefabricated by the adults. And progressive educators realize that the students must help to formulate not only the course of study but also the outcomes or standards that inform those lessons.

Some of the features that I've listed here will seem objectionable, or at least unsettling, to educators at more traditional schools, while others will be surprisingly familiar and may even echo sentiments that they, themselves, have expressed. But progressive educators don't merely say they endorse ideas like "love of learning" or "a sense of community." They're willing to put these values into practice even if doing so requires them to up-end traditions. They may eliminate homework altogether if it's clear that students view after-school assignments as something to be gotten over with as soon as possible. They will question things like honors classes and awards assemblies that clearly undermine a sense of community. Progressive schools, in short, follow their core values—bolstered by research and experience—wherever they lead.

What It Isn't

Misconceptions about progressive education generally take two forms. Either it is defined too narrowly so that the significance of the change it represents is understated, or else an exaggerated, caricatured version is presented in order to justify dismissing the whole approach. Let's take each of these in turn.

Individualized attention from caring, respectful teachers is terribly important. But it does not a progressive school make. To assume otherwise not only dilutes progressivism; it's unfair to traditional educators, most of whom are not callous Gradgrinds or ruler-wielding nuns. In fact, it's perfectly consistent to view education as the pro-

cess of filling children up with bits of knowledge—and to use worksheets, lectures, quizzes, homework, grades, and other such methods in pursuit of that goal—while being genuinely concerned about each child's progress. Schools with warm, responsive teachers who know each student personally can take pride in that fact, but they shouldn't claim on that basis to be progressive.

Moreover, traditional schools aren't always about memorizing dates and definitions; sometimes they're also committed to helping students understand ideas. As one science teacher pointed out, "For thoughtful traditionalists, thinking is couched in terms of comprehending, integrating, and applying knowledge." However, the student's task in such classrooms is "comprehending how the teacher has integrated or applied the ideas… and [then] reconstruct[ing] the teacher's thinking."[3] There are interesting concepts being discussed in some traditional classrooms, in other words, but what distinguishes progressive education is that students must construct their own understanding of ideas.

There's another mistake based on too narrow a definition, which took me a while to catch on to: A school that is culturally progressive is not necessarily educationally progressive. An institution can be steeped in lefty politics and multi-grain values; it can be committed to diversity, peace, and saving the planet—but remain strikingly traditional in its pedagogy. In fact, one can imagine an old-fashioned pour-in-the-facts approach being used to teach lessons in tolerance or even radical politics.[4]

Less innocuous, or accidental, is the tendency to paint progressive education as a touchy-feely, loosey-goosey, fluffy, fuzzy, undemanding exercise in leftover hippie idealism—or Rousseauvian Romanticism. In this cartoon version of the tradition, kids are free to do anything they please, the curriculum can consist of whatever is fun (and nothing that isn't fun). Learning is thought to happen automatically while the teachers just stand by, observing and beaming. I lack the space here to offer examples of this sort of misrepresentation—or a full account of why it's so profoundly wrong—but trust me: People really do sneer at the idea of progressive education based on an image that has little to do with progressive education.

Why It Makes Sense

For most people, the fundamental reason to choose, or offer, a progressive education is a function of their basic values: "a rock-bottom commitment to democracy," as Joseph Featherstone put it; a belief that meeting children's needs should take precedence over preparing future employees; and a desire to nourish curiosity, creativity, compassion, skepticism, and other virtues.

Fortunately, what may have begun with values (for any of us as individuals, and also for education itself, historically speaking) has turned out to be supported by solid data. A truly impressive collection of research has demonstrated that when stu-

dents are able to spend more time thinking about ideas than memorizing facts and practicing skills—and when they are invited to help direct their own learning—they are not only more likely to enjoy what they're doing but to do it better. Progressive education isn't just more appealing; it's also more productive.

I reviewed decades' worth of research in the late 1990s: studies of preschools and high schools; studies of instruction in reading, writing, math, and science; broad studies of "open classrooms," "student-centered" education, and teaching consistent with constructivist accounts of learning, but also investigations of specific innovations like democratic classrooms, multiage instruction, looping, cooperative learning, and authentic assessment (including the abolition of grades). Across domains, the results overwhelmingly favor progressive education. Regardless of one's values, in other words, this approach can be recommended purely on the basis of its effectiveness. And if your criteria are more ambitious—long-term retention of what's been taught, the capacity to understand ideas and apply them to new kinds of problems, a desire to continue learning—the relative benefits of progressive education are even greater.[5] This conclusion is only strengthened by the lack of data to support the value of standardized tests, homework, conventional discipline (based on rewards or consequences), competition, and other traditional practices.[6]

Since I published that research review, similar findings have continued to accumulate. Several newer studies confirm that traditional academic instruction for very young children is counterproductive.[7] Students in elementary and middle school did better in science when their teaching was "centered on projects in which they took a high degree of initiative. Traditional activities, such as completing worksheets and reading primarily from textbooks, seemed to have no positive effect."[8] Another recent study found that an "inquiry-based" approach to learning is more beneficial than conventional methods for low-income and minority students.[9] The results go on and on. In fact, I occasionally stumble upon older research that I'd missed earlier—including a classic five-year investigation of almost 11,000 children between the ages of eight and sixteen, which found that students who attended progressive schools were less likely to cheat than those who attended conventional schools—a result that persisted even after the researchers controlled for age, IQ, and family background.[10]

Why It's Rare

Despite the fact that all schools can be located on a continuum stretching between the poles of totally progressive and totally traditional—or, actually, on a series of continuums reflecting the various components of those models—it's usually possible to visit a school and come away with a pretty clear sense of whether it can be classified as predominantly progressive. It's also possible to reach a conclusion

about how many schools—or even individual classrooms—in America merit that label: damned few. The higher the grade level, the rarer such teaching tends to be, and it's not even all that prevalent at the lower grades.[11] (Also, while it's probably true that most progressive schools are independent, most independent schools are not progressive.)

The rarity of this approach, while discouraging to some of us, is also rather significant with respect to the larger debate about education. If progressive schooling is actually quite uncommon, then it's hard to blame our problems (real or alleged) on this model. Indeed, the facts have the effect of turning the argument on its head: If students aren't learning effectively, it may be because of the persistence of traditional beliefs and practices in our nation's schools.

But we're also left with a question: If progressive education is so terrific, why is it still the exception rather than the rule? I often ask the people who attend my lectures to reflect on this, and the answers that come back are varied and provocative. For starters, they tell me, progressive education is not only less familiar but also much harder to do, and especially to do well. It asks a lot more of the students and at first can seem a burden to those who have figured out how to play the game in traditional classrooms—often succeeding by conventional standards without doing much real thinking. It's also much more demanding of teachers, who have to know their subject matter inside and out if they want their students to "make sense of biology or literature" as opposed to "simply memoriz[ing] the frog's anatomy or the sentence's structure."[12] But progressive teachers also have to know a lot about pedagogy because no amount of content knowledge (say, expertise in science or English) can tell you how to facilitate learning. The belief that anyone who knows enough math can teach it is a corollary of the belief that learning is a process of passive absorption—a view that cognitive science has decisively debunked.

Progressive teachers also have to be comfortable with uncertainty, not only to abandon a predictable march toward the "right answer" but to let students play an active role in the quest for meaning that replaces it. That means a willingness to give up some control and let students take some ownership, which requires guts as well as talent. These characteristics appear not to be as common as we might like to think. Almost a decade ago, in an interview for this magazine, I recalled my own experience in high school classrooms with some chagrin: "I prided myself on being an entertaining lecturer, very knowledgeable, funny, charismatic, and so on. It took me years to realize [that my] classroom was all about me, not about the kids. It was about teaching, not about learning."[13] The more we're influenced by the insights of progressive education, the more we're forced to rethink what it means to be a good teacher. That process will unavoidably ruffle some feathers, including our own.

And speaking of feather-ruffling, I'm frequently reminded that progressive education has an uphill journey because of the larger culture we live in. It's an approach

that is in some respects inherently subversive, and people in power do not always enjoy being subverted. As Vito Perrone has written, "The values of progressivism—including skepticism, questioning, challenging, openness, and seeking alternate possibilities—have long struggled for acceptance in American society. That they did not come to dominate the schools is not surprising."[14]

There is pressure to raise standardized test scores, something that progressive education manages to do only sometimes and by accident—not only because that isn't its purpose but also because such tests measure what matters least. (The recognition of that fact explains why progressive schools would never dream of using standardized tests as part of their admissions process.) More insidiously, though, we face pressure to standardize our practices in general. Thinking is messy, and deep thinking is really messy. This reality coexists uneasily with demands for order—in schools where the curriculum is supposed to be carefully coordinated across grade levels and planned well ahead of time, or in society at large.

And then (as my audiences invariably point out) there are parents who have never been invited to reconsider their assumptions about education. As a result, they may be impressed by the wrong things, reassured by signs of traditionalism—letter grades, spelling quizzes, heavy textbooks, a teacher in firm control of the classroom—and unnerved by their absence. Even if their children are obviously unhappy, parents may accept that as a fact of life. Instead of wanting the next generation to get better than we got, it's as though their position was: "Listen, if it was bad enough for me, it's bad enough for my kids." Perhaps they subscribe to what might be called the Listerine theory of education, based on a famous ad campaign that sought to sell this particular brand of mouthwash on the theory that if it tasted vile, it obviously worked well. The converse proposition, of course, is that anything appealing is likely to be ineffective. If a child is lucky enough to be in a classroom featuring, say, student-designed project-based investigations, the parent may wonder, "But is she really learning anything? Where are the worksheets?" And so the teachers feel pressure to make the instruction worse.

All progressive schools experience a constant undertow, perhaps a request to reintroduce grades of some kind, to give special enrichments to the children of the "gifted" parents, to start up a competitive sports program (because American children evidently don't get enough of winning and losing outside of school), to punish the kid who did that bad thing to my kid, to administer a standardized test or two ("just so we can see how they're doing"), and, above all, to get the kids ready for what comes next—even if this amounts to teaching them badly so they'll be prepared for the bad teaching to which they'll be subjected later.[15]

This list doesn't exhaust the reasons that progressive education is uncommon. However, the discussion that preceded it, of progressive education's advantages, was also incomplete, which suggests that working to make it a little more common is a worthy pursuit. We may not be able to transform a whole school, or even a class-

room, along all of these dimensions, at least not by the end of this year. But whatever progress we can make is likely to benefit our students. And doing what's best for them is the reason all of us got into this line of work in the first place.

Sidebar: A Dozen Questions for Progressive Schools

Because of what I've described as the undertow that progressive educators inevitably experience, it's possible for them to wake up one morning with the unsettling realization that their school has succumbed to a creeping traditionalism and drifted from the vision of its founders. Here are some pointed questions to spur collective reflection and, perhaps, corrective action.

1. Is our school committed to being educationally progressive, or is it content with an atmosphere that's progressive only in the political or cultural sense of the word?

2. Is a progressive vision being pursued unapologetically, or does a fear of alienating potential applicants lead to compromising that mission and trying to be all things to all people? ("We offer a nurturing environment… of rigorous college preparation.")

3. Is the education that the oldest students receive just as progressive as that offered to the youngest, or would a visitor conclude that those in the upper grades seem to attend a different school altogether?

4. Is the teaching organized around problems, projects, and questions? Is most of the instruction truly interdisciplinary, or is literature routinely separated from social studies – or even from spelling? Has acquiring skills (e.g., arithmetic, vocabulary) come to be over-emphasized rather than seen as a means to the end of understanding and communicating ideas?

5. To what extent are students involved in designing the curriculum? Is it a learner-centered environment, or are lessons presented to the children as faits accomplis? How much are students involved in other decisions, such as room decoration, classroom management, assessment, and so on? Are teachers maintaining control over children, even in subtle ways, so that the classrooms are less democratic than they could be?

6. Is assessment consistent with a progressive vision, or are students evaluated and rated with elaborate rubrics[16] and grade-substitutes? Do students end up, as in many traditional schools, spending so much time thinking about how well they're doing that they're no longer as engaged with what they're doing?

7. Do administrators respect teachers' professionalism and need for autonomy—or is there a style of top-down control that's inconsistent with how teachers are urged to treat students? Conversely, is it possible that teachers' insistence on being left alone has permitted them to drift from genuinely progressive practice in some areas?

8. Are educators acting like lifelong learners, always willing to question familiar ways—or do they sometimes fall back on tradition and justify practices on the grounds that something is just "the [name of school] way"? Are teachers encouraged to visit one another's classrooms and offered opportunities to talk about pedagogy on a regular basis?

9. Is cooperation emphasized throughout the school—or are there remnants of an adversarial approach? Do students typically make decisions by trying to reach consensus or do they simply vote? Do competitive games still dominate physical education and even show up in classrooms? Do most learning experiences take place in pairs and small groups, or does the default arrangement consist of having students do things on their own?

10. Is homework assigned only when it's absolutely necessary to extend and enrich a lesson, or is it assigned on a regular basis (as in a traditional school)? If homework is given, are the assignments predicated on—and justified by—a behaviorist model of "reinforcing" what they were taught—or do they truly deepen students' understanding of, and engagement with, ideas? How much of a role do the students play in making decisions about homework?

11. Does the question "How will this affect children's interest in learning (and in the topic at hand)?" inform all choices about curriculum, instruction, and scheduling—or has a focus on right answers and "rigor" led some students to become less curious about, and excited by, what they're doing?

12. Is the school as progressive and collaborative in nonacademic (social, behavioral) matters as it is in the academic realm, or are there remnants of "consequence"-based control such that the focus is sometimes more on order and compliance than on fostering moral reasoning, social skills, and democratic dispositions?

NOTES

1. The latter view is represented in both the Reggio Emilia approach to early-childhood education and the Foxfire tradition.
2. James H. Nehring, "Progressive vs. Traditional: Reframing an Old Debate," Education Week, February 1, 2006, p. 32.
3. Mark Windschitl, "Why We Can't Talk to One Another About Science Education Reform," Phi Delta Kappan, January 2006, p. 352.
4. As I was preparing this article, a middle-school student of my acquaintance happened to tell me about a class she was taking that featured a scathing indictment of American imperialism – as well as fact-based quizzes and report cards that praised students for being "well behaved" and "on-task."
5. See Alfie Kohn, The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards" (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), esp. Appendix A.
6. I've tackled each of these issues in separate books. See the sources cited in, respectively, The Case Against Standardized Testing (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000), The Homework Myth (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006), Beyond Discipline, rev. ed. (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2006), and No Contest: The Case Against Competition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986/1992). Still other research exists to challenge assumptions about the benefits of specific practices ranging from school uniforms to explicit instruction in grammar.
7. See the addendum to "Early-Childhood Education: The Case Against Direct Instruction of Academic Skills" at www.alfiekohn.org/teaching/ece.htm.
8. Harold Wenglinsky, "Facts or Critical Thinking Skills?", Educational Leadership, September 2004, p. 33.
9. Michael Klentschy, Leslie Garrison, and Olga Ameral's four-year review of student achievement data is summarized in Olaf Jorgenson and Rick Vanosdall, "The Death of Science?" Phi Delta Kappan, April 2002, p. 604.
10. Character Education Inquiry, Studies in the Nature of Character. Volume 1: Studies in Deceit (New York: Macmillan, 1928), Book 2, p. 184.
11. Educational historian Larry Cuban's review of "almost 7,000 different classroom accounts and results from studies in numerous settings revealed the persistent occurrence of teacher-centered practices since the turn of the century" (How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890-1980 [New York: Longman, 1984]). John Goodlad, author of the classic study A Place Called School, revisited the subject in 1999 and concluded that "although progressive views have enjoyed sufficient visibility to bring down on them and their adherents barrages of negative rhetoric, they have managed to create only isolated islands of practice.... Most teachers adhere closely to a view of school as they experienced it as students and so perpetuate the traditional" ("Flow, Eros, and Ethos in Educational Renewal," Phi Delta Kappan, April 1999, p. 573). His assessment was corroborated as recently as last year by a national study of first, third, and fifth grade classrooms in more than 1,000 schools: "Children spent most of their time (91.2%) working in whole-group or individual-seatwork settings" and "the average fifth grader received five times as much instruction in basic skills as instruction focused on problem solving or reasoning; this ratio was 10:1 in first and third grades" (Robert C. Pianta et al., "Opportunities to Learn in America's Elementary Classrooms," Science, vol. 315, March 30, 2007, p. 1795). A study of 669 classrooms in Washington state, meanwhile, found that "strong constructivist teaching was observable in about 17% of the classroom lessons" (Martin L. Abbott and Jeffrey T. Fouts, "Constructivist Teaching and Student Achievement," Washington School Research Center, Technical Report #5, February 2003, p. 1). For still more evidence, see Kohn, Schools, pp. 5-9.
12. David K. Cohen and Carol A. Barnes, "Conclusion: A New Pedagogy for Policy?" in Teaching for Understanding, ed. by David K. Cohen et al. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993), p. 245. The relevance of this point for the largely unsuccessful efforts of progressive education to establish itself over time has been noted by many thinkers, including John Dewey, Lawrence Cremin, and Linda Darling-Hammond.
13. Kitty Thuermer, "In Defense of the Progressive School: An Interview with Alfie Kohn," Independent School, Fall 1999, p. 96. In their book Methods That Matter (York, ME: Stenhouse, 1998), Harvey Daniels and Marilyn Bizar drove the point home: "Teachers probably wouldn't have originally chosen their vocation if they didn't crave the spotlight on some deep psychological level. The hunger to 'really teach something' has probably

derailed more student-centered innovations than administrative cowardice and textbook company co-option combined" (p. 12).

14. Vito Perrone, "Why Do We Need a Pedagogy of Understanding?" in Teaching for Understanding, ed. by Martha Stone Wiske (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), p. 23.

15. For more on this phenomenon, see my essay "Getting-Hit-on-the-Head Lessons," Education Week, September 7, 2005, pp. 52, 46-47.

16. See Maja Wilson, Rethinking Rubrics in Writing Assessment (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006); or my article "The Trouble with Rubrics," English Journal, March 2006, pp. 12-15.

The Fall and Rise of the 8th Grade School

By Stan Brimberg, *Division Coordinator of the Upper School*

Back in the Little House on the Prairie days, as most of us know, sort of, an 8th grade education was the industry standard, the measured dose of formal learning that American children swallowed before getting on with their lives. That made sense, in a way: there was the recognition that on an individual level as well as for the good of society, people should read and write and know how to do sums so that they could pray, use the almanac, compose letters, count the chickens, and, later, file their tax returns. It was well and good to get some schooling, but the cow needed milking and the field needed tending. I have a strong hunch that the reason it was an 8th grade education rather than a 7th or a 9th is that someone probably observed that most kids stopped looking like kids just about the time they were fourteen.

The last four years of that eight-year journey, from around ten years old to around fourteen, were and are complex and profound. That span is probably the most significant in human development after ages one through five. It's then that there are gradual and rather sudden and radical changes in physical, emotional, social and cognitive growth. When reformers were looking at education at the beginning of the 20th century, a pivotal time in the history of education in America, they recognized that early adolescence didn't quite fit into childhood or adulthood. But in their attempt to make things better for everyone, they took something away from the children in those important years.

America had industrialized in the last quarter of the 19th century and European immigration, especially to the big cities, had put millions of people, many of them children, into the labor force; the reform movement took children out of factories and put them into schools; new compulsory education laws kept them there. These events provided educational reformers with both pressure and opportunity to think about what education might look like from that time forward. While Lucy Sprague Mitchell at Bank Street, Caroline Pratt at City and Country, and Hazel Hyde at the Town School were designing independent schools as laboratories for effective learning by focusing on what children needed as they grew, reformers debated about what public schools were for and how they could be used to advance society: the 8th grade school had not been intended to prepare citizens to participate actively in a democracy, for which John Dewey argued, nor did it prepare workers as efficiently as promoters of the factory model would have liked.

So, they first proposed to shorten the number of years children spent in aptly named grammar schools and to extend secondary education downward. The 8-4 configuration, that is, eight years of elementary education followed by four of secondary,

would give way to a 6-6 configuration. Then, with the recognition that early adolescents were like amphibians, with a flipper in the ocean of childhood and a foot on the dry land of adulthood, that was modified to the 6-3-3 or 6-2-4 model. The concept of the junior high/intermediate school/middle school was born, and while a few schools across the city and country continued as they had, the era of the 8th grade school effectively came to an end.

Most children probably had had enough of the 3 R's and diagramming sentences by the end of sixth grade, and there was a need for change. But there were a number of built in benefits to the development of the individual as a learner and as a person that were part and parcel of the 8th grade model that were entirely absent from the middle school model. So while the curricular reform might have been warranted, its cost has been enormous.

If that experiment hasn't been an abject failure, neither has it been a rousing success. Few people look back at their junior high days as the best in their educational lives; they were surely the worst in mine. But while the configuration still persists, true love's kiss, that which seems to be awakening states and municipalities from this century of slumber, is research that suggests that children who attend smaller 8th grade parochial schools around the country seem to get higher standardized test scores than their counterparts in middle schools.

Why?

One obvious advantage is that in an 8th grade school, curriculum can be more easily sequenced and coordinated from early childhood through 8th grade. Information about students, how each learns, a record of achievement across many curricula, may be kept and shared over a period of years. A more cohesive and coordinated approach to education is easier to accomplish in one school than in two.

But there may be a more fundamental reason why 8th grade schools work: what the 8th grade schools always had done in the past, maybe as a function of convenience, or just because of human nature, was to place a virtual tent around childhood that incorporated the essential qualities of that village you always hear about that is required to raise a child, even an older one. For those older children in particular, the 8th grade school was as much just exactly what they needed as the middle school was not.

People know each other, and for a long time, in an 8th grade school. While small town familiarity can be disconcerting for some people, especially city people who value a certain amount of anonymity, the beneficial consequences far outweigh the sacrifice of some privacy. Parents who have been involved with the school in a child's earlier years are much more likely to remain involved. Since long term relationships between parents, teachers and students are inevitable, people notice when something is different about a child: if she or he is worried, for example, a teacher or other

adult at the school will reach out to the child and to a parent. The members of this extended family are also there to encourage children they know, to root for them, and to celebrate with them. There is more often than not a tremendous sense of connection to the school. Supports for academic, emotional and community matters are natural outgrowths of the long relationships that evolve.

Students feel safe with their teachers and their classmates. When learners feel safe, they raise their hands to ask questions, they try out and challenge ideas, new tools, and they even risk being wrong. They grow from those leaps outside the familiar and comfortable.

Most children begin to learn about the world at school through play. Play changes up through the grades, but to an extent, the comfort with which children enter into it with each other is a function of the continuity of those relationships. When they leave their elementary schools to attend middle schools, there are border crossings into new countries populated by children they don't know, many of whom are older than they are. Disconnected from their roots as younger children, middle school students often feel that they have to look and act more grown up. They may feel pressure to abandon aspects of play that are quite useful in learning. In 8th grade schools, your middle-school-age classmates were your lower-school-age playmates, and so the modalities that cement learning, like using dramatization, dress-up, model building, and other extensions of play, are still very available.

Related to this, in K-12 schools, the presence of older high school students can affect younger students similarly. High school students can be engaging, supportive and intellectual. But often, those behaviors are more typical of what their peers see inside classrooms than what their younger schoolmates see of them in common areas before and after classes when they are in more social modes. And while younger students might know many of the older students from when they were in that division, most K-12s have an infusion of 9th graders who are unknown to the younger students. In an 8th grade school, with no older children sharing the space, there is no one to imitate or emulate, no one for whose attention to compete, no one older making judgments about what you are wearing or what you say. Early adolescents are free to remain children for a little longer, and the comfort that follows from this builds confidence and competence.

As the older children, they can be role models for their younger classmates. It's common for 8th grade schools to have buddy programs in which older students partner with younger ones over time. Sometimes the older children are mentors, in activities which solidify a child's own learning and contribute to self-esteem. Older children may be seen as protectors, and the notion that a younger child can have an older friend is a powerful one that in itself reinforces community.

The acquisition of content knowledge, the building up of not only academic but social skills that emerge from evolving relationships with other children and the ac-

cumulation of self-knowledge that comes, in part, from the safety children feel and their relationships with trusted adult teachers, all position the 8th grade student for the important life choice of where he or she should attend high school: Who am I as a learner? As a person? What do I need in a school? Which schools would be a good fit for me? In this last year-long process, the student is transformed from a person who is practicing classroom activities that simulate making decisions of consequence, to one who is participating in a real decision of great consequence. In addition to being a most appropriate "senior project" at the end of an elementary school career, it is also the most empowering. Graduates of 8th grade schools make confident, competent, successful high school students.

Schools today need to motivate students to use their intellect and their humanity to acquire skills, concepts and information that will enable them to communicate clearly and effectively with each other, to solve problems on the personal and community levels, to enter into positive relationships, and to make others and themselves happy. Because of the inherent configuration of the 8th grade school model as a small village in the big world, because of the built-in supports for students as they grow and develop, it is a natural one to help students work toward these goals.

No Ordinary Field Trip
A Conversation with John Lewis

By Sam Brian, *Upper School Teacher*

It's never an ordinary senior trip to the nation's capitol. Hunkered down in one of the great marble hallways off which doorways led to the offices of various congressmen, we were forty 8th grade students and their teachers in pursuit of our appointment with a living legend, Congressman John Lewis. We had studied this living icon of the Civil Rights Movement, this first leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, this veteran of the sit-ins, the freedom rides, this apostle of nonviolent civil disobedience. We had seen the films of John Lewis standing before the advancing Alabama troopers seconds before the beating on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Now we were so close to meeting the man. Finally, the word came that a room had been secured, and clutching the questions they had written back in Bank Street, the students rose and scurried up a grand staircase and into a room to await the congressman.

Minutes later Congressman Lewis entered and strode to the front. At 62 years of age he is short, and powerfully built. "Which one of you is representing me?" he asked. In my letter to the congressman I had informed him that we were a mock Congress, a Senate and a House, and that one of the students had represented his Atlanta, Georgia district. The other thirty-nine members of Bank Street School's 30th Congress leaned forward, expectantly. And the questions started to fly.

"How did you get interested in politics?" one student asked, and John catapulted backward in time and place to Pike County Alabama. He spoke about how he used to preach sermons to the chickens he was responsible for tending on his father's farm. "I believe today that those chickens were more attentive than some of my colleagues in the House are today. And those chickens were always productive."

"When you led the first march over the bridge in Selma, your own organization, SNCC, refused to participate with Martin Luther King's group, SCLC. Why?" The question threw John back to the dramatic confrontations of the Civil Rights struggle, his eyes closing, his mind turning inward to remember. He described a contentious SNCC meeting lasting deep into a Saturday night in Atlanta, his decision to break with his own organization, and an all night drive from Atlanta to reach Selma by daybreak. John explained how he stopped at SNCC's "freedom house" in Selma, packed a toothbrush and a book to read for the inevitable jail time that would follow the march and the arrest, how he and another freedom fighter, Hosea Williams, were selected to lead the marchers on the five day walk to the state Capitol, Montgomery. How eerily silent were the streets of Selma that Sunday as they led the line of 800 through downtown Selma and started over the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

As he spoke, his eyes fluttered open and closed again. His large hands gestured dramatically, and his tone was low and full. He described marching up the arc of the bridge to its crest high above the Alabama River where he and Hosea Williams could first look ahead, down to the foot of the bridge, and glimpse the sea of blue uniformed Alabama State Troopers that Governor George Wallace had stationed there to prevent the march from going forward.

"That's when Hosea asked me, 'John, can you swim?' and I said, 'Not very much, can you?'" As the line of marchers, with John and Hosea at it's head, came to a halt just feet away from the police, they were ordered to disperse. The marchers stood still; the troopers pulled on their gas masks. John recalled how Hosea glanced over, and, pointing to his nose, said, "John, they are going to gas us." One of John's staff members displayed an enlarged black and white photograph of troopers, batons flailing, trampling over falling protesters at the foot of the bridge. The room was silent. Some looked down, averting their eyes from the national disgrace of "Bloody Sunday," 1965.

"Were you ever afraid?" a student asked. John explained that he didn't feel fear when he committed acts of nonviolent civil disobedience and faced armed police, beatings, or jail. What he did fear was snakes. John launched into a heated testimonial about his fear and loathing of snakes. "If you were to say John, do this thing, or we're going to put you in a dark dungeon full of snakes, I would say, just kill me instead. That's just how much I hate snakes." John didn't always answer the questions he was asked directly. One student remarked later that John's story of the beating on the bridge answered about ten questions he had, but that he really didn't explain why SNCC didn't support the March from Selma to Montgomery.

"Why did you change your speech when you spoke in the March on Washington?" John's aide displayed a picture of the 22 year-old John, with a full head of hair, thin, earnest, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial delivering his speech shortly before Dr. King took the podium for his "I Have a Dream" speech. John explained that he believed then that the bill Kennedy had given to Congress, the bill that would become the 1964 Civil Rights Act, was "too little and too late." He wanted to give a powerful speech that day, but some of the planners of the march thought he'd gone too far with his words. John displayed a picture of the architects of the march, "the big six" he called them, the day before the history-making event. "I'm the only one left alive," he pronounced sadly, turning to point out the slight youth beside all the others. "This is me, this is Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, this is A. Philip Randolph, founder of one of the earliest black unions, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and this is Dr. Martin Luther King." As his hand touched each of the members, the room was charged with their presence. Forgetting the question of the changed speech, we stared at the picture of the "big six". It seemed as though the image of Dr. King might stir under his hand and add a detail to John's story. Given the aura of history in the room at that

time, we might have accepted it without comment.

"You know who General Sherman was?" John asked, snapping us from our historical reverie. One of our students reassured John that we all knew the Union General Sherman had laid waste to a wide swath of Georgia "from Atlanta to the sea" during the Civil War. "Well, toward the end of that controversial draft of my speech I mentioned General Sherman in a way that really upset A. Philip Randolph." John's voice became deep, booming as he intoned, "The time will come when we will not confine our marching to Washington. We will march through the South, through the heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did. We will pursue our own 'scorched earth' policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground—nonviolently." John related how, as the first speakers were already addressing the crowd that day, A. Philip Randolph, one of the big six, pleaded with John in a security hut behind the monument. The famous labor organizer had himself proposed a March on Washington in 1941 to protest racial discrimination in war industries and to propose the desegregation of the American Armed forces. That march was cancelled after President of the United States Franklin Roosevelt signed an executive order that addressed some of their issues. "When a man like Randolph pleads with you, it is hard to say no." John explained that he kept the ideas of the speech, but that he did remove the reference to General Sherman moments before he took his turn at the podium that day.

The congressman's aides were signaling an upcoming vote on the House floor. John would have fifteen minutes, to walk the long halls, to travel under Independence Avenue on the special capitol train, to emerge on the House floor, and to slip his plastic voting card into the slot by his seat.

"Have you ever had a conflict between your conscience and the views of your constituents," a student asked, slipping in a final question and invoking a classic question of representative democracy. Without hesitation Lewis said that congressmen should always follow their conscience. "I don't always agree with my constituents about everything, but they reelect me each time with about 75 or 80 per cent of the vote." At this point, the Congressman's aides prevailed on him to head out to cast his vote, and our meeting with John Lewis was over. One of our teachers asked the students to stay seated, and we asked the students for their responses to the meeting.

"Moving"

"So powerful"

"It's hard to put in words. I felt like I was right there with him sometimes."

"When he told his stories, it seemed like he was reliving what he was telling about."

One of the teachers asked how many of the students, having met John Lewis, were considering public service, at the local, state, or national level. Ten hands went up, one in four. One student proclaimed, "I'm definitely running for Congress." Whether any student runs for political office as the result of the visit, we were cer-

tainly taking away lessons about conscience and political activism. We had learned that the difference between a stand of conscience and a political compromise was measured in the parsed meaning of a word. We had learned that physical courage was something other than a confrontation with a scaly reptile, but something conditioned by faith and philosophy. We had experienced the conflicting pull of competing loyalty as John was forced to choose between his commitment to his conscience and his commitment to the organization he led.

It has often been said that the object of social studies is to have students identify with the struggles, the dilemmas of people from times past and places often distant. To the degree that our conversations with John Lewis broke down these barriers of time and space, and we identified with the struggles of the past, this field trip was an extraordinary success.

Progressive Education in Context II

Introduction

We are proud to offer you Volume II of *Progressive Education in Context*. In this edition, members of the School for Children community describe aspects of progressive education in terms of their own area of expertise and experience.

- Anne Tobias, a 4/5s teacher, shares her understanding and perspective of the intellectual, social, and emotional development of children in *Young Children at Play*. This article clarifies, and builds an appreciation and understanding of, the importance of play in the lives of children.
- The second article, *Technology at the Bank Street School for Children,* is written by Wendy Apfel, the Technology Coordinator. Wendy shares the overriding mission, vision, and values of technology in conjunction with progressive education.
- In the third article by Meghan Armstrong, a 10/11s teacher, we follow her summer journey to China in terms of the China curriculum that she teaches.

We hope that these articles provide you with different and distinct perspectives on our educational program and community. Happy reading!

Young Children at Play

By Anne Tobias, *Lower School Teacher*

Take two steps into a classroom of four- and five-year-olds. Then just lean against the wall…listen…watch.

Over by the windows, two girls are taking wooden blocks from the shelf and setting them down on the floor. They move with purpose, and their block structures quickly begin to fill the space. As they work, they talk: "Let's make big squares for us to go into!" "That's too hard." "Well, how 'bout we make just one?" More work, nudging the end of a block into place, lowering the last long shape carefully, climbing into the large square enclosure. The girls' voices ring out: "We're sailing! To San Francisco! Get books to read along the way."

A few feet away, a table is strewn with scraps of paper. Several children are drawing and snipping with scissors. A boy firmly presses down on a piece of tape, affixing a flat wooden stick to his drawing. Lifting it up he cries, "Who wants a ticket to the volcano?" and walks around the classroom, repeating his message. Soon children are swept into his idea, eager for a ticket, which the boy rushes back to the table to make. In time, business is so good, he teams up with a partner to keep up with demand.

At a broad table near the sink, a child tears a small chunk of clay from a larger mound, then pushes it flat on a clay board. Again and again, she repeats the action until the flattened pieces form a long line that scrolls away from her board to meet a similar clay line made by a friend. Moments later, the children start talking about the Hudson River, as their own clay rivers emerge and connect.

This classroom is full of movement and sound. The vital pace of interchange runs as a current through the air. Children are playing, and through play, children are learning about themselves, each other, and their environment. They are making meaning.

Play offers children space to explore their salient social-emotional ideas—about power, about danger and safety, about caring and being cared for, about the fascinating details and workings of their human and material environment. As part of their study of the New York City subway, a group of children used hollow blocks on the deck to build their own train—a seat for the driver and a place for the conductor to walk, seats for passengers, a caboose to store "freight," and, ever more fabulously, a game room and a special place for traveling cats. Maps aided travel. Rails got broken and fixed. Taxis ferried passengers to the train station. Children played through what they knew, what they wished for, and what they wondered about.

For young children, the world can sometimes be a scary place. Children seek ways to feel safe and powerful, and test their fears. Enacting a thrilling conquest over monsters, children can actively try out their thoughts and feelings in a way that seems real or almost real in the moment but exists with an understood degree of separation

from reality. In the midst of play, a child will sometimes look up and say, "But it's only pretend," as if to reassure herself and others. One day, a girl stood at the snow-filled sensory table, using one hand to direct small plastic whales through the chilly mounds and pools. In the other hand, she grasped a "mean" shark and swam him close to the whales, saying "but he can't come in to where the babies are." Danger was present, yet safety prevailed.

Through play, children create and control their own versions of the world as they move toward more complex understandings. Deciding to be a family in the dramatic-play area, one child says, "I want to be the mommy!" Brows furrowed, another child says, "But I'm the mommy." The moment bristles, ideas about family and the force of personal agendas seem to collide, then: "We could both be mommies. Sometimes there are two mommies." The game moves on, its family firmly in place. But a slight and essential shift has taken place. A child's need has been accommodated by a friend. An understanding about families has been spoken and accepted. In the context of play, children are growing and learning.

Classrooms in Bank Street's Lower School are set up to invite play, with teachers firm in the belief that children at play are meaningfully involved in aspects of social, emotional, and cognitive development—a core piece of learning. As children strive to create play themes and then propel the play forward, they actively engage with one another, using language and action to express ideas and feelings related to their own unfolding understanding of themselves in the world as well as discovering and navigating other children's perspectives. One year, birthday parties were a big theme in the dramatic-play area, with children bringing their experience to bear as they collaborated on this idea. "Let's pretend it's your birthday today," said one child. "Here's your birthday card!" And the story was off and running, with the busy writing of birthday invitations, travel to the party in a taxi through rain and snow, then arrival at the birthday child's hollow-block house. "Ding, dong. We're here! I got the pizza and the cheeses and some fruits too." Children managed their different preferences for the details of birthday celebrations by taking turns being the birthday child and being in charge of the narrative of the play.

Clearly, though play is an intuitive and primary activity for most typically developing children, it is, at the same time, a complex and challenging activity. For the ongoing demands of collaboration are strong, asking children to arrive at a multitude of mutual agreements and to resolve a multitude of conflicts as they attempt to share space, materials, and ideas. Two girls and one boy have built a "police boat" with hollow blocks in the classroom. While their friend stirs corks in a bowl to make "egg soup" for the hard-working crew, the other children pick up telephones and talk to each other. "Ahoy, captain!" "Is something bad happening?" "There's oil, and a hole in the bottom of the boat." This news gets the attention of the cook who rushes to "try to fix it." She looks with annoyance at her girl friend and says, "You're only call-

ing me and not your dad." Which causes the boy to say, "But sometimes you're going to call me, huh?" Taking on new roles, navigating fast-moving and unpredictable ideas, sharing friends—play means taking risks. Stretching to understand and take care of friends—play means actively practicing empathy.

While children's voices stand out in play, teachers maintain an important presence. On any given day, at any given time, a teacher might serve as an observer, a mediator, or even an active player, depending on the needs of the children. In all these roles, and more, she is a guide as children take on the complexities of play. Indeed, conflicts that arise during play—centered on issues that matter so deeply to children—are essential experiences that provide space for teaching and learning. What happens when a friend insists on being "the boss of the game"? What happens when the chasing game gets too rough? What happens when your friend decides to play with someone else? Grappling with these conflicts and working toward resolution provide authentic opportunities for children, supported by their teachers, to grow socially and emotionally.

And then there are the many joys. For children still have the power through play to become anything they can imagine and, in playing, know the secret of re-inventing the world.

Technology at the Bank Street School for Children

Wendy Apfel, *Technology Coordinator*

Technology finds its home in a unique, ever-shifting space within progressive education. At the School for Children, we envision technology as a tool to support learning and growth, and to help make developmentally appropriate and meaningful connections between teaching and learning and the outside world. One might observe students from the 4/5s capturing video on a Flipcam while on a neighborhood walk, and returning to reflect on their findings in the classroom. In the 10/11s one can observe students interacting with students in China, both classes posting photos of their experiences with various day-to-day activities including food or transportation, viewing each others photos, leaving comments, and replying to questions online. In various classrooms within the Upper School, students are collaborating with their peers online via secure classroom websites and designing their own websites as part of a virtual museum, amongst other projects involving technology.

As a leader in progressive education, the School for Children serves as a model for the meaningful use of technology in a progressive school setting. The Bank Street School for Children is committed to thoughtful use of technology and ongoing examination of its impact on learning, individuals, and the community. Technology provides important tools for teaching and learning, and can enable our teachers and students to:

- Support learning as a social, collaborative process
- Solve problems in many different group settings
- Develop a stronger sense of community and social responsibility
- Structure learning around artifacts, stories, historical documents, and shared experiences
- Design experiences which lead children to make discoveries about big ideas
- Replicate and reflect on outside experiences inside the classroom
- Support multiple means of representation, presentation, and expressing student thought
- Support differentiated learning experiences to help students learn in the ways that work best for them
- Tap into the diversity of the world allowing for global connections

As a progressive school, we have an obligation to consistently evaluate and innovate with regard to the role technology plays in the achievement of our learning

objectives, in order to best meet our students' ever evolving needs. Teachers survey their students' learning needs and work with the technology coordinator to identify and implement technology that best meets students' needs and enhances curricula. Classrooms are equipped with developmentally appropriate and purposefully implemented technology tools for student and faculty use. We examine and integrate grade level milestones for technology skill development into the curriculum to further 21st century skills and innovative learning environments. We continue to promote the safe and responsible use of technology throughout our entire community.

The School for Children is committed to the thoughtful implementation of new technologies, which connect teaching and learning to the outside world. As we undertake this initiative, it is important to ensure faculty's exposure to the tools that reflect innovation and the importance of technology in all facets of our society. The school is committed to providing appropriate professional development, training, and support, so teachers are prepared to integrate technologies that will complement and strengthen existing pedagogy. As a school we will ensure that new technologies are adopted in a strategic fashion, with requisite professional development for faculty. We will also provide opportunities for faculty to share and showcase the ways they have creatively used technology in their classrooms, and support collegial collaboration. We will also pursue partnerships with other Independent Schools and organizations for purposes of expanding teacher's exposure to new technologies.

The technology available today offers unique opportunities to enhance instruction and learning in developmentally appropriate ways, empowering students to be more proactive in the acquisition of knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the development of good judgment. As progressive educators, we are obligated to carefully evaluate new technology, tools, and content before we can take steps to thoughtfully and meaningfully integrate them into the classroom learning experience.

Teaching China

By Meghan Armstrong, *Upper School Teacher*

> *[Suzhou] is a very great and noble city. The people are subjects of the Great Khan, and have paper money. They possess silk in great quantities, from which they make gold brocade and other stuffs, and they live by their manufactures and trade… In this city there are 6,000 bridges, all of stone, and so lofty that two ships together could pass underneath them.*
>
> — *Marco Polo, 1295*

We gather in the lobby of our swanky hotel in Suzhou, China, and then walk up the elegant spiral stairs to our reserved dining room. We, the fellows of China Institute's *Teach China* program, wait silently at the door for seating assignments. The fifteen of us, with our four guides, had spent the day with teachers and administrators of Suzhou High School, held by many to be the most prestigious high school in China. They were hosting a banquet to celebrate the many new relationships formed between teachers from China and the United States.

I wondered if I would be seated at the table of honor, or the "kid's table," as we had dubbed it. I did some quick calculations in my head, there were seven teachers older than I, and seven who were younger. I wasn't sure how many administrators and teachers were coming, so my seating assignment could go either way.

"Meghan, please sit at the far table." Yay! I was assigned to the table of honor! I felt ambivalent about being seated based on age, but I was proud to be considered one of the master teachers in my group. The seats at our table were almost filled with our American leaders and Chinese partners when Jim, with his long grey hair and grey beard, showed up late to the event. Our leader looked at me and asked, "Meghan, can you move to the other table please?" I had been demoted to the young teachers' table! Well, okay, that table looked like much more fun anyway.

We had been in China for two weeks and were by now familiar with the cultural practices of a formal dinner: the highest ranking person sits at the far side of the circular table, facing the door. Then, elders are seated to her/his left and right consecutively, according to rank. All dishes are offered first to the person of honor, and he or she takes the choicest piece of meat or fruit. This person sometimes argues that it's not necessary to have the best piece of meat, but it is the job of the inferiors to insist on it.

Principal Zhuo started the meal off with a formal toast, thanking the China Institute for traveling to Suzhou, and for helping the school further its mission of international exchange. We all stood around the table, holding our wine glasses with two hands, listening intently to the principal. In China, it is important for inferiors to show respect by holding their glasses slightly lower during the clink. Since we were all eager to show respect for each other, we started by clinking high over the table, but rapidly, the toasts moved lower and lower until wine glasses were all touching the table.

As the meal came to a close, the presentation of gifts began. First, Principal Zhou presented to our China Institute leader a framed photograph of Suzhou High School with its motto "Behave with honesty. Treat people with sincerity." Then, I presented the China Institute gift to Principal Zhou. This entailed a rigid protocol for gift giving: First, you must say what you're thanking the person for. Second, you describe the present to the audience and tell why you chose it. Third, you present the gift with two hands. Fourth, you smile for the photographs while both the giver and receiver hold onto the gift.

In my speech, I thanked Principal Zhou for taking the time to show us his extraordinary school, explaining to us their local geography-based curriculum, and walking us through the school museum which contained 5,000 year old artifacts that Suzhou High School students had unearthed, preserved, and curated. Our tour of Suzhou High School had truly changed the way I thought about education in China. While you'll have to consult my co-fellows as to the adequacy of my gratitude speech and description of the gift, I can say that I managed to hold onto it with two hands while smiling for the camera. To me, it was a cultural success.

Suzhou was just one of the places I had come to see on this month-long tour. I was selected, along with fourteen other teachers from across the country, for the China Institutes' annual *Teach China* study tour. We spent all of this past July on an information-packed tour of five Chinese cities. During this time, we traveled with our own personal professor, Professor Renqui Yu, who gave lectures almost every day. We met daily with experts and officials, learning about culture, religion, politics, education, economics, and history.

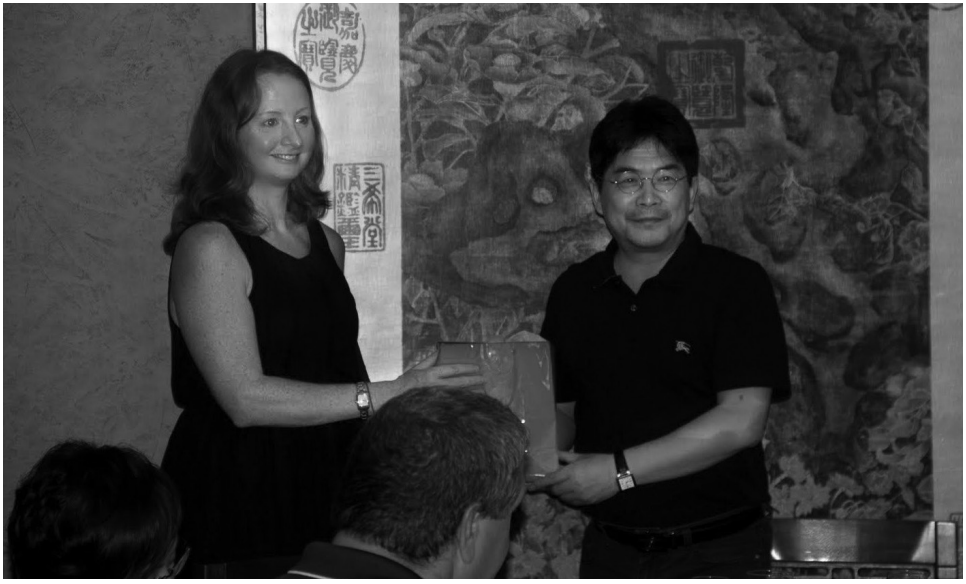
The fifth grade humanities curriculum at Bank Street is a year-long study of China. I co-wrote the China curriculum two years ago, with my humanities partner Eve Andrias. China has proven an excellent basis for our humanities curriculum as we are able to compare and contrast another culture in order to think deeply about our broad curricular themes of culture, geography, leadership, and immigration. The themes of the curriculum had been determined before we started writing; and Chinese culture, rich with ancient civilization and modern paradigms, has proven to be an exciting, engaging, and increasingly relevant way to explore those themes. Never having been to China, I had only secondhand knowledge of the country. Since

Teach China Fellows at Suzhou High School.

I was now using it as a vehicle to teach about culture, I felt the need to study the primary text: the country itself. I needed to see and learn for myself to be able to teach others.

The value of studying other cultures comes first from exposure to other ways of living. Once we've understood that, we come to have better perspective on our own way of living. We can even start to perceive aspects of our own culture that can seem invisible to us. While in China, we had the opportunity to visit an urban village. This walled community, which had the area of half of a square mile, contained most of the facilities and services necessary in a community: an ancestral temple, a community building for committee meetings and social functions, a school, and all the necessary shops. Families could trace their ancestors' roots in this village for tens of generations. Even in cities, Chinese people are deeply rooted to the land and their ancestors. By contrast, Americans are generally tied to the idea of individual accomplishment and families are often scattered across the continent. China, however, is changing rapidly, as much of the rural population is moving to urban areas for job opportunities fueled by the global economy. As we try to understand modern China, we must keep in mind Ancient China's core values.

In the fifth grade at Bank Street, we start the year off with a study of the concept of culture. We have an email relationship with a school in Beijing, through which our



Presenting our gift to Principal Zhou.

students are able to compare and contrast aspects of our and their cultures. Students share parts of their culture like transportation, holidays, sports, hobbies, music, and food. It is through these concrete comparisons, and through reading about many aspects of culture that fifth graders gain a better understanding of the abstract concept of culture.

We have an incredible resource here in New York City, in our Chinatown. As part of the culture study, we take a field trip to Chinatown and the students spend the day searching for evidence of Chinese culture. They notice groups of people playing *xianqi* (Chinese chess) in Chatham Park, stores full of Chinese herbs, and Buddhist temples alive with prayer and song. For many students, the most memorable part of the day is the meal at a Chinese-American restaurant. The food we are served in Chinatown only vaguely resembles the food in China. However, students delight in pouring each other tea, eating with chopsticks, and sharing dishes with the ever-rotating Lazy Susan.

The day is full of learning, and the meal is a chance for a new experience. But this year, there will be a new aspect to the meal we eat in Chinatown: seating according to status. Chopsticks and tea are a novelty. But seating according to status is a strong social statement, very different from American sensibilities. It has the ability to teach the students something new. Of course, this would require putting all the teachers and chaperones at one table and the kids at another. Similar to the banquet in Suzhou, the "kids table," sounds like a lot more fun.

Progressive Education in Context III

Introduction

Progressive Education in Context has become a tradition at Bank Street. Volume III continues to focus on the life of Bank Street from the many perspectives that live within the walls of the school. Contributors to this volume include a current parent, the two school psychologists, two Upper School teachers, and a 2011 graduate of the School for Children. Once again, we want our readers to get to know Bank Street from as many different points of view as possible.

The first article, *A Parent's Point of View*, is written by Sandra Pinnavaia, who has had years of experience as a Bank Street parent and is currently a member of the Board of Trustees. Sandra shares her observations of a Bank Street education through the experiences of her three children: two who graduated and one who will be in the 7th Grade (12/13s) this year. She reflects upon why her family chose Bank Street "three times over" for very different children and why she believes it is a "very special place to begin a child's educational journey."

The second article, *What Are You Doing for Others*, is written by Traci Pearl and Sasha Elias, two 6th Grade (11/12s) teachers in the Upper School. Traci and Sasha have developed a thoughtful and effective Community Service program for the Upper School students (5th through 8th grade), known as Day of Service, with which the response to the question, "What are you doing for others?" is answered with pride and enthusiasm. Their article addresses the mission behind the Day of Service as well as the practical plan to put it in action. Students in the Upper School find meaning and purpose in this opportunity, which, each year, will extend beyond this event.

In the article *Ron Taffel: Visiting Scholar at Bank Street*, Anne Santa and Buffy Smith, the School for Children psychologists, describe the yearlong work with the author and well-known psychologist Ron Taffel. Anne and Buffy worked closely with Ron throughout the year as he conducted workshops with both parents and faculty to address many of the current issues that face children and adults, as outlined in his books: *Childhood Unbound* and *Second Family*. At the end of the article, we include a list of suggestions that Ron presented in his final workshop about how to communicate with your child.

Finally, *The Last Word* was written by Abby Miller for graduation. Abby was a member of the School for Children Class of 2011 and currently attends Dalton. In the tradition of a Bank Street graduation, Abby had 1.5 to 2 minutes to find a way to give back to Bank Street in any format that was meaningful to her. Abby wrote an essay in which she beautifully reflected on her experience at Bank Street, in terms of her learning at specific junctures in her education and what it meant to her, then and now.

A Parent's Point of View

By Sandra Pinnavaia, *School for Children Parent*

When people ask us why we chose Bank Street School for Children… three separate times… for our three (very different) children, we always boil it down into… three simple reasons. From "hardest" to "softest," here we go:

1. Educational excellence

We believe strongly in the core educational philosophy at Bank Street. You've read about it, and we really believe it: that learning happens best through experience, that meaning must be made through exploration and wrestling with complex issues, and that learning with, from, and in relation to others is a critical life skill. Perhaps these phrases are used in other places, but at Bank Street it is refreshingly and honestly at the very core of the approach.

My husband and I recognized that our most influential learning moments had come when this philosophy was in action. We deeply believe that future citizens of the world (not to mention future professionals) will need better and better preparation to navigate an ever-more rapidly changing world full of problems. We ourselves had received more traditional educations (he at a prep school; me at a public school), and let's just say we were looking for more.

Simultaneously, we will admit to being risk-averse education snobs and wanted our offspring to have all the best options as they grew up for high school and college. So we wanted "proof of concept" that the Bank Street philosophy in action from age three to Grade 8 really worked in the competitive modern educational environment. The high school and college placements of SFC alumni were compelling for us—range and depth, impressive all. It was clear to us that Bank Street is not a cookie-cutter feeder school that produced one flavor of high performers. Perhaps most telling for us was the alumni panel, where fascinating and composed young people spoke so articulately about their paths and how Bank Street shaped the people they grew to be and the values they hold dear—whether their professions were in academia, business, law, medicine, the arts, or public service and beyond.

This has all played out for our kids so far: they have had incredible options at the high school and college levels. But more importantly, they have felt confident about who they are, what they were looking for, and how to choose among these options.

2. Sanity

We admit it: we live crazy lives in the very cauldron of one of the most competitive cities in the world. We reluctantly acknowledged at their births that our children would be surrounded by competition: on playgrounds and in music class, in restaurant sophistication and vacation destination, on travel sports teams and at talent shows. Perhaps most importantly, we knew they were destined for an ever-escalating academic "arms race," with a very real risk of early burnout.

We longed for a place where our children could be children for as long as possible. Perhaps because both my husband and I grew up outside of the city (he in suburban Baltimore, me in rural mid-Michigan), and because we are second-generation college grads in each of our families, we really wanted to preserve our kids' space for wonder, curiosity, and discovery.

We wanted school to not make either our kids or us crazy. We wanted school to be fun, mind-expanding, and a place where the right things mattered. We wanted them to play and argue and invent and learn every day, and most of all to love going to school.

Bank Street provides this environment nearly perfectly. The homework assignments are intelligent and meaningful; they are paced appropriately for age groups. Bank Street stretches, supports, and coaches children in equal measure. Not surprisingly, with three kids we have had many instances in which one of our kids was either "ahead of" or "behind" the "average" of their classmates, in one subject or one way or another (note that these words are in quotation marks because they are words never used at Bank Street) and for the most part, Bank Street responded perfectly with either more runway, more challenge, or more support. Hence, the learning environment both in school and at home is a sane and smart one. Our kids entered high school well prepared academically and yet still fresh, not cynical, and ready for more.

And our family has had so much fun along the way. Rock Band concerts are as much a learning experience as curriculum night; the various enactments and drama nights are not only picture-perfect but really connected to academic and social curricula. We never had a moment of feeling like we were in competition with other families on any subject. Many of our best friendships have been formed at Bank Street. In heartfelt terms, it is a truly sane oasis in NYC.

And don't worry, they still learn how to handle competition and pressure!

3. Passion

Bank Street is a community full of passion about children and about learning. This manifests itself in one of the most caring, engaged, and skilled communities imaginable. The kids are passionately engaged in their classrooms and without ex-

ception become passionate advocates on many issues. The teachers are passionate learners themselves and endlessly interested in how each child is unique. They find remarkable things in every child and truly help little personalities emerge. They support parents with wisdom and compassion at every developmental stage and often, for us, provided landmarks and a map to navigate difficult passages.

We had the occasion to deal with our share of bumps in the road, beginning with a three-year-old biting incident and carrying right on through various crises of adolescence. We, at every step, found support from the teachers and other staff who really, deeply knew our children and cared about their motivations and their well-being. We felt supported; our kids felt supported; they thrived and continue to do so.

A final note: We are enormously grateful to Bank Street School for Children and to Bank Street College. Many people fail to appreciate the many benefits that accrue to the school, its students, faculty, and families because the school is embedded in a leading college of education. From basement to roof deck, every square inch of Bank Street is devoted to what makes early childhood education great. Bank Street College has been an innovative, leading voice in education for nearly 100 years, and simple actions such as riding in the elevator with graduate faculty or seeing graduate students working together animatedly in the cafeteria, give a glimpse of the amount and elegance of the day to day work going on in the building. Everyone benefits from the rich intellectual and professional environment it makes around the very topics of children and education. It is a very special place for kids and families to begin their educational journeys.

What Are You Doing for Others?

By Traci Pearl and Sasha Elias, *Upper School Teachers*

For the past three years, students in the Upper School have taken part in a Day of Service in order to commemorate the life and work of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By the time students reach the Upper School, many of them have a great deal of knowledge about the life and trials of Dr. King and other key civil rights activists. Starting with their own families and communities, students and teachers have examined how they can be activists in their own lives. Preadolescents and adolescents are often observed, rightly, to be self-centered in their journeys toward independence and responsibility. Participating in a Day of Service to commemorate Dr. King's ideals pushes students to stretch the confines of their world beyond themselves and their immediate concerns. At a pivotal point in adolescent development, students are empowered to effect change in their own world. They are ready to take on activism in a new way; they are ready to respond to the question, "What are you doing for others?"

We begin the Day of Service by listening to a speech of Dr. King. In his Drum Major Instinct sermon, he said:

> *We all want to be important, to surpass others, to achieve distinction, to lead the parade … It's a good instinct if you don't distort it and pervert it. Don't give it up. Keep feeling the need for being important. Keep feeling the need for being first. But I want you to be first in love. (Amen) I want you to be first in moral excellence. I want you to be first in generosity.*

We hope our students will reach beyond the world of their own adolescent egos. We want them to think about how they can help their communities and to feel their own importance by giving to others.

Various age-appropriate activities allow us to reach the community in a different ways. Teachers place students into mixed-age groups, based on student interest. 'Interaging' provides opportunities within the group for leadership, 'modeling,' and bonding. Activities range from baking and making items to sell for charity to helping clean and sort toys for the organization Room to Grow. Students particularly enjoy working with children in our own Family Center, in Bank Street Head Start, and in the

An assembly line preparation of sandwiches.

"I grew because I got to see myself in these kids shoes and I couldn't have done that without them." 11/12s student

"The coolest thing about my Day of Service activity was that we got to see and talk to who we were helping. Once we were done cleaning the toys we could even give it directly to a child!" 11/12s student

Bloomingdale Head Start programs. Groups of students have also entertained senior citizens at nursing homes and have cleaned portions of Riverside Park and Central Park. One year, during a stormy winter, students used shovels, axes, and chisels to clear ice from stairs and walkways.

After the morning assembly, students meet with their assigned teacher leaders and parent volunteers. Students can ask questions and voice any concerns they have about the day. They may, for instance, have anxiety about how they will react when they see a sick child at the hospital, about whether they won't be able to complete the task they are assigned, or even about negotiating group dynamics during the ac-

A group of students cleaning Central Park.

tivities. Threaded throughout each discussion are thoughtful reminders and words of encouragement.

The energy upon returning to the fourth floor once students complete their activities is always joyful and electric: rosy cheeks and tales from the day—about playing with the little kids, or perhaps getting stuck in the elevator. These stories last for days afterward and become a lasting memory of the school year. We ask all students in the Upper School to reflect on the experience in writing for that evening's homework. The prompts differ by grade level, but the exercise provides students and teachers a springboard for continued dialogue about community service in their lives and in our school community.

The Day of Service has become a tradition after only three years. A student in the 13s this year proudly stated, "I've made lunches for St. John the Divine soup kitchen for two years in a row. Can I be in that group again?" The students own this day and often look for ways to continue their work beyond it. Several students returned to Bloomingdale Head Start this year and worked with students for several hours each week in the classrooms. They are overjoyed to share their experiences, and their growth is evident in how they carry themselves and make time in their busy schedules to do even more.

Historically, community service has been an important component of the mission of our institution and the curriculum of the School for Children. Over the years, students have initiated and developed projects such as starting a school in Cambodia, getting used baseball equipment to school kids in Haiti, raising money for seeing eye dogs, and sending dolls to orphanages in China. Teachers help facilitate projects as

Students work with children in the Family Center.

they emerge from students' personal experiences. We are proud to be a part of the tradition of community service at Bank Street.

The Day of Service is an ideal component of constructivist education and fits in well with our mission statement and credo. Early on, students examine communities and the role of the individual within a community. From the 6/7s market to the Upper School Science Expo, students investigate the world around them and use this knowledge to make meaning and solve problems. Community service helps students to think about the world in different ways. They step out into the community, supported by organizations, families, and teachers. And by helping others, they learn about themselves.

Ron Taffel: Visiting Scholar at Bank Street

By Anne Santa and Buffy Smith, *School Psychologists*

When parents filled the auditorium on a school night last fall, we knew they were eager for more information about raising their kids in this time of greater access to technology, heightened peer pressure, and more demanding working-parent schedules. So began a yearlong discourse at Bank Street, when Ron Taffel, author and well-known psychologist, agreed to meet with our parents and support their efforts to raise responsible and compassionate children. His premise was clear: There are different kinds of stressors for both children and adults today, and so parents and teachers must meet their needs "to be loved, to be taught values, and to be held" in new ways.

Ron's work with our community began when Bank Street invited him to be Visiting Scholar for the 2011-2012 academic year. His work unites faculty and parents in addressing the complicated relationship needs of this generation's children.

In preparation for his work with us, faculty and parents read two of Ron's books: *Childhood Unbound* and *The Second Family*. In the fall, teachers and administrators met in cross-divisional groups to discuss these readings. The discussions brought home our understanding of the pressures students feel, especially given the increasingly early exposure to peer pressure and the impact of media. In addition, many children lead highly "managed" lives, going to numerous afterschool activities, with less and less time for free play and self-initiated activities. Social interactions have now permeated home life with texting, email, and Facebook exchanges extending children's engagement with each other and eating into time with their parents. Social media provide a virtual space that adults are little involved in, and yet they have a tremendous impact on children's lives. Students tell us, "In one evening, everything can change, and if I am not online I can come to school and not know what is going on."

Ron met with parents over the course of the year, discussing myth versus reality in 21st century parenting. He titled these talks: Consequences: Getting Kids to Listen; Communication: Keeping Kids Talking from Pre-K to Adolescence; and Effective Praise: Genuine Self-esteem and Resilience. The richest and best-liked part of these Wednesday morning talks was the exchange of ideas that arose from parents' questions and stories of their own experiences with their children. Although parenting styles may be different, our goals are similar: we want to raise children who can self-regulate and approach each other in a compassionate way.

Our parents enjoyed Ron's practical, interactive approach. Often, at the end of a

Wednesday morning meeting with Ron, parents lingered to compare notes with each other, or to suggest future directions for conversation. Many noted that Ron had a way of putting them all at ease, and of recognizing that we're all in this together. He encouraged parents to reflect on what they discussed between meetings, and to watch themselves parent, and take note of what kinds of exchanges worked and what seemed less productive. Parents expressed appreciation for this continuity, and for Ron's warmth, knowledge, and sense of humor about the challenges of parenting today.

One aspect of Ron's conversations with our community focused on an understanding of children's temperaments. While he was meeting and talking with parents about this aspect of their own children, teachers were meeting together to talk about the importance of knowing individual children well, starting with understanding their temperament patterns. This, coupled with understanding their learning styles, lays the groundwork for attention to the whole child. Teachers discussed, for example, "What about the child whose sensory threshold is low and can easily get overwhelmed with noise?" You might see that child taking a break in the hallway to do some drawing or see him wearing some headphones while he reads. "What about the child who needs warnings before a transition?" You can hear the warning call at recess or on deck "five more minutes until cleanup." Or "what about the child who feels things so intensely?" You might see the teacher asking that child to write or draw those feelings, expressing them in a way that does not distract his friends from doing their work.

Ron's work was powerful in helping us knit home and school together, both in deepening our understanding of our children, and in better supporting them. This work will stay with our community, and the themes and ideas broached will be carried forth by Bank Street school psychologists in the months to come. For example, we are planning to have some grade-level-specific parent meetings next year, focusing on the developmental and parenting issues particular to specific age groups, and some back-to-school handouts that will include "What to expect developmentally." We will continue to teach our children to be compassionate and responsible using Ron's wisdom and the creative and thoughtful skills of our adult community.

Notes from Ron's meetings with parents were made available to all via the Virtual Backpack, a week or two following each presentation. What follows here is a sample of one set of those notes, from Ron's March 14th discussion, "How to Communicate with Your Child." Enjoy!

Ron Taffel: How to Communicate with Your Child

For Bank Street March 14, 2012

For a variety of reasons, our culture places less emphasis on parent-child hierarchy than it used to. This has affected family life profoundly, moving it from an attitude that 'children should be seen and not heard' to one that values open communication between adults and kids. As a result, children from an early age on are way more articulate about their thoughts and feelings than previous generations. And they feel at liberty to express themselves to us just about whenever they feel like it. This is good and how most of us want it to be.

The ability of children to be more articulate than ever, though, does not necessarily mean they will be open with us about what truly matters. Nor can we rely on kids' listening to our guidance merely because we are 'the parents.' So, how do we encourage children to talk to us about what is important—and be open to adult guidance? Here are the latest findings on better parent-child communication:

1) Think about it—the best discussions happen when you are in *parallel position* and not looking at each other—on a drive, taking a walk, playing a game, or lying next to your child at bedtime. Paradoxically, discussion is easiest when you are both in the middle of doing something else.

2) Every child has a different *conversational style*. Instead of fighting against it or trying to impose a way of talking on kids, notice when your child enjoys opening up the most, whether he likes being prompted by questions or not, what pace of conversation is comfortable, and how sensitive to tone she is.

3) *Build rituals* around your child's conversational style. These are the moments that matter in childrearing, so do what you can to protect that time. Make yourself available and potentially focused, i.e., see if you can turn off technology and those inevitable 21st century interruptions. This need only be 10-15 minutes, so it's actually doable. If you can't be there when she normally likes to talk, then create natural times together: cook, have a catch, give the little one a bath, etc. Conversation will often bubble up.

4) Many kids say *bedtime* is their favorite time for talking. Why? Kids are often bored when they put their head down and wait for sleep. This is the first time all day that the 21st century's world of constant stimulation is turned off. And our oh-so-interactive children often have trouble amusing and soothing themselves. So, don't just read to them, but also tell stories about yourself, your life and history. This will quickly soothe your child or remind her of something that happened that day—which can

be the start of a great conversation. The bad news is that bedtime will take a little longer—the very good news is that you can talk to each other in a more relaxed, open way.

5) *Talking rituals can save lives.* The research shows that the more you have mealtimes with your child, the later he or she will become sexually active or engage in dangerous behavior in adolescence. Don't worry about what to serve, just make it an ongoing part of your lives. If you can't have regular mealtimes because of work demands, not to worry—go to the diner on the weekend, have a Sunday night dinner ritual, etc. Just set it up so it's predictable and becomes something you and your family can count on.

6) If you have a couple or several children, try to have one-on-one *'date nights.'* This is a proven ritual that large families use: be with one child alone for 20 minutes at night, after school, or the weekend. Johnny on Tuesday, Jenny on Wednesday, and so on. When sibs take turns, you both will talk more easily.

Communication Dos and Don'ts

First the ***Don'ts****:*

Don't grill your children at dinnertime, don't pepper them with questions. *Talk about your own day* and your child may well chime in about his.

Don't *lecture*. This is one of the biggest conversation stoppers we do with our kids, but we often can't help ourselves. Try to.

Don't be too *judgmental*. Voice your values, your kids need to hear them—but try not to weigh your opinion down with holier-than-thou judgments. Twenty-first century kids are *allergic* to this.

Don't *interrupt*—we always do, time is short, kids' stories meander, and we've got places to go. But this is one of the biggest complaints children have.

The details matter to kids. So don't skip over them—those tiny details are often the doorway to what counts in kids' minds.

Don't *'fix it'*—they're our children, so it's natural for us to want to make them feel better, but all it does is make kids stubbornly stick to the bad feelings. In fact, the same happens with adults.

Don't talk when you or your child is upset or the both of you are in one of your '*dances*.' The research now proves what we already knew: nothing gets through in either direction when we're really upset.

Don't ask the question, *'Why?'* Who really knows why we do what we do. And besides shutting conversation down, most often kids haven't got a clue.

Don't say anything *online* to your child that you wouldn't want to be public knowledge, because once you commit it to the web or a text it can 'go viral,' without your permission or even your knowledge.

Now for the ***Dos****:*

Watch yourself (your own nonverbal responses) and notice your child's reactions—tone, energy, eagerness to share, pacing. To paraphrase Yogi Berra, *"You can see a lot just by observing."*

Ask concrete action questions. "What happened next?" "Who was there?" "What were they wearing?" "What did they say?" "What did you say back?"

Respond like a *human being* so that your child can *feel* you. Kids need to have the sense of you as a real person with real (though not 'losing it') reactions. We aren't therapists. If he doesn't get a reaction from you he will go to a second family for a response—after all, the peer group is not shy.

Get your child to tell *'the story.'* Our children learn written literacy—but they also need to learn how to develop emotional literacy, and this comes from being able to tell a story about what happened, hopefully with a beginning, a middle, and an end. (More or less—they are kids.)

Stay with the story. Do not immediately rush in with an *action plan*. You're a parent, not a project manager.

Give advice after the story has been told and you respond emotionally. To lessen stubbornness, use this introduction: "I know things are *totally different for you now than when I was growing up* (very true), but I remember when something sort of similar happened to me…"

Tell your child what you believe and what you might do, then ask her what she might do. Go back and forth, and be clear about your own values—if you won't, the second family of the peer group and pop culture will, for sure!

And finally, keep whatever you say *short*. Attention spans today are almost non-existent—know your audience.

The myth that kids don't talk to parents as they get older just ain't necessarily so. Follow these guidelines and you will have a greater chance to keep the lines of communication open about what really matters in your child's life.

The Last Word

By Abby Miller, *Bank Street School for Children – 2011, The Dalton School – 2015*

My first day at Bank Street, in the 4/5s, was September 10, 2001.

The next day we all left early. Everyone was panicking, and no one really could explain why. But Bank Street helped us get through that day. We had meetings where we could talk about anything we were feeling. Some kids built tall buildings out of blocks and knocked them down and worked out their fears through play. Today, when I look back on my 10 years here, I'm grateful that Bank Street did more than give us a great education in humanities, math, and science. It also helped us deal with scary things and made us more aware of the world around us and how to make our way in it.

In the 6/7s we studied cities, and, at the end of the year, we got to make our very own city out of wine crates. Each of us got to choose what store we wanted to make, and we all got money to spend on everyone else's stores. I ran a restaurant, which brought in a decent income but nowhere near as much as my friend Katie's pet store. Though I don't think we realized it at the time, we were learning how to work together, how to resolve conflicts, and how individuals come together to make up a community.

As we began the 10/11s, we were all anxious about one looming event: the upper school dance. But Bank Street was not going to just throw us onto the dance floor unprepared. The week before, older kids taught us how to do some basic line dances such as the Cha-Cha Slide, The Cotton-Eyed-Joe, and the Electric Slide. They also showed us how to slow dance. The teachers demonstrated how to properly ask someone to dance and how to respond: with a yes. In the end, what might have been a tragically awkward evening brought us all together as a tightly-knit grade.

Sometimes, Bank Street helped us deal with our fears by making us face them. This year, my class participated in a poetry slam at the Nuyorican Poets Café. We all had to recite our poems on a professional stage in the East Village for a big audience of parents and teachers. I ignored the strong wish I had to fake being sick, or refuse to go on stage. After all, Bank Street had prepared me for public performance in years of assemblies where I stood up and talked about my Hudson River painting, or my experience at Frost Valley. I read my poem, and it helped me feel more comfortable on stage in Annie and at my spring violin recital.

This year, when we studied American government, we did more than read textbooks. In our mock Congress, I took on the role of Utah Senator Orrin Hatch and tried my best to argue against President Obama's health care plan. I was a justice in

our mock Supreme Court, and last month visited the real court where our class met Justice Sotomayor. We learned that making laws is messy, and that all of our constitutional rights have limits and exceptions.

The world still can seem like a scary place—that's one unfortunate lesson that a good education must include. But I'm grateful to Bank Street for showing me how to deal with that… And, of course, for teaching me how to do the Cotton-Eyed Joe.

Progressive Education in Context IV

Introduction

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Progressive Education in Context*. Over the years, this publication has afforded us the opportunity to share the deep thinking and ongoing reflection that goes into providing a rich and thorough program of quality education. The first four articles in this volume represent the experience and thought that goes into the work of the teachers and administrators at the Bank Street School for Children. And, as part of tradition, the final article, "The Last Word", is a graduation speech given by a 2012 student of the SFC.

The first article, "Test-Taking or Not in the Early Years", illuminates Bank Street's historic approach to assessing children in the admissions process. Anne Santa, the School Psychologist, in collaboration with the two Learning Specialists, Beth Handler and Beth O'Mara, explore the tradition at Bank Street of using methods other than an ERB test to understand children in the admissions process. Although many independent schools will no longer use that test as a tool for admissions for Kindergarten, the School for Children has always believed in and implemented "observation and recording" within a developmentally appropriate framework to best understand who the child is and how the child learns.

The second article, "Tools for Life – A Presentation by the Division Coordinator of the Lower School", was given by Lower School Coordinator Laura Guarino at Curriculum Night in October, 2012. This speech details the larger view of learning in today's world and its relevance in progressive education. Laura reminds parents that their children are embarking on an educational journey, ignited by curiosity, fueled by the joy of discovery, and sustained by an environment safe enough for taking risks. Through a trusting partnership between parents and school wherein children are allowed to meet the challenges of living and learning in a very complicated world, it is our goal to initiate the journey toward becoming productive, capable, and good human beings.

The third article, "When Good Ideas Flow Two Ways", discusses two collaborations between the School for Children and the College's Graduate School.

Families often wonder about the *value-added* of sending their children to Bank Street, and this article addresses how we utilize the resources of the different divisions of Bank Street College in order to make each other stronger.

The fourth article, "Loudness in the Library: Empowering Students to Think Critically about Identity and Bias" is one example of how thinking about community and diversity is embedded in curriculum and experience. Anshu Wahi, Director of Diversity and Community, worked with Jamie Steinfeld, an 11/12s teacher, and Allison Bruce, the Interim Children's Librarian, to explore a book cover project with students in the 6 Grade.

And finally, "The Last Word" is the graduation speech from June 2012 of Shana Fletcher, who has just completed her first year at LREI (Little Red Elisabeth Irwin High School). Shana shares her experience and perspective of entering the School for Children in the 2nd Grade as a girl of color from Brooklyn.

We hope that you not only enjoy reading these articles along with those in the other volumes, but also that you gain an even better understanding of our program —what we do and how we do it—all within the framework of progressive education.

Test-Taking or Not in the Early Years

By Anne Santa, *School Psychologist*
with Beth Handler and Beth O'Mara, *Learning Specialists*

How does a test score describe a 5-year-old? Too narrowly and oftentimes unfairly would be Bank Street's answer. From the onset, Bank Street has dedicated its efforts to teach and attend to the needs of the whole child. As a result, our admissions process focuses on getting to know children in the context of their play and their interactions in small groups, as opposed to examining their test scores. Bank Street has a long tradition of observing and recording behavior in order to get to know children, and our mission guides us as we begin to assess the possibility of a good fit between a child and our progressive school. This initial admissions conversation is the beginning of the school and parent partnership, which extends from the admissions process to a child's graduation.

Since 1919, when Bank Street College of Education was known as the Bureau of Educational Experiments and established a nursery school, we have worked hard to admit children who we think are ready to learn in a school that uses active learning characterized by collaboration among children and adults and interactions with a variety of materials and methods. Thus, the learning includes the experiential component of students constructing their own meaning by having to explain their journeys to their conclusions. This is quite different from answering questions on a standardized test on which an answer is either right or wrong, wherein the teacher or assessor is not trained to participate in extended conversations about the reasoning behind children's thinking.

To be ready to learn in a Lower School classroom at Bank Street, a child needs to enjoy others, to be able to talk about his/her own thoughts, feelings and ideas, and to be able to self regulate in an age-appropriate fashion. The social learning that occurs in a progressive school forms a large part of a child's growth, and to determine whether or not Bank Street would be a good fit, it only makes sense that a large part of the admissions process involves social and cooperative experiences. In the process we ask children to spend time playing and executing several teacher-directed tasks in order for the admissions committee to get to know the children. These observations are then shared with parents in order to see similarities and differences between home behavior.

As brain research has borne out, so much of learning is experiential and emotionally based. Children are naturally curious in environments where they feel nurtured, safe and stimulated, and our job as educators is to create those environments. To

learn, work and grow in those environments we look for groups of children with a wide range of interests, temperaments, and a wide representation of backgrounds and cultures. Reducing the admissions process to the measure of a test score would not enable us to accomplish this goal.

In a school where "the whole child" is our focus, we are eager to see what each child brings in terms of passion and gift. At Bank Street, it might be the girl who builds a "stadium" when she transforms her cardboard box for the first grade's Box City, or the boy who loves to talk and write books about what he is learning. These individual flames of interest and skill are also what we look for in Admissions and what we strive to cultivate in a each child's school years. No test can tell that story.

Tools for Life – Lower School Coordinator Laura Guarino's Address to Lower School Families on Curriculum Night, October 25, 2012

By Laura Guarino, *Division Coordinator of the Lower School*

A Bank Street education is one that nurtures the passion for life and learning that lives within every child. Ignited by curiosity, fueled by the joy of discovery, and sustained by an environment safe enough for risk taking—your children are embarking on an educational journey that is both developmentally appropriate and deeply engaging. And because we both support and stretch children, adults will become role models for *leaning into the discomfort* of a challenge. We remind children that setbacks are to be expected—even embraced. By doing this, we help them recognize where true growth occurs. It is our job to make sure that they also know that character matters; that manners matter; that who you are and how you treat others is as important as *what* you know; that kindness isn't optional. We model compassion when we support the notion that it is possible to do well as an individual without it having to be at the expense of others in the group.

We *and they* are living in an increasingly fast paced, high-pressured world. One way to ease some of the pressure on us and on them is to relinquish the fantasy that if we just did our best to avoid some of the misguided, but well-meaning, nurturing that we received if we got it *just right* with our kids, it would somehow result in perfection, if not for us as parents, at least for them as kids! There is no way around it: to be human is to know that we are not (and never will be) perfect , and that neither will they be. But we also know from experience that success in life is often directly related to how well we learn the strengths and flaws of who we are as individuals and then set goals and take risks anyway.

So along with teaching the skills required to *do your best*, which we do, we need to teach the skill of recognizing when being just who we are, where we are, is *good enough*. It is a delicate balance, this striving for excellence without too much stressing. But it is well worth the effort to find ways to teach that balance now, from the very start. It is possible to offer the gift of an unhurried childhood by valuing their right to play, to have big feelings, and to need some down time. By embracing the inevitability of uneven early development, we accept that our children will grow and develop at their own pace.

A Bank Street education, a progressive education, has never been more relevant. Unlike any other time in human history, given the rapid pace of technological growth,

many of the skills needed for the jobs that our children will someday hold, cannot be taught, because those skills and jobs haven't yet been invented. So instead of focusing on standards designed to measure young children in terms of "data in and data out" in ways that really don't predict success or effectiveness, *we* have always focused on helping children develop their capacity to *be* learners, to be flexible thinkers and creative problem solvers.

And there is much we want them to learn. But we want that learning to take place through active engagement with a rigorous curriculum. Skill development is then anchored by firsthand experience. We believe this approach will serve them well and we know it fosters a passion for lifelong learning. We each have a role to play in shaping what life will look like as our children venture from the safety of your family to the community of school. Rest assured that they will work hard as they move from egocentric to collaborative engagement with the world.

However, being a school kid is different than being a kid in a family. The axis of center shifts when you enter the social world of school. At school, children are learning how to be one within the many, how to hold onto their voices while making space for others.

Your child's job is first to get comfortable. We support them with separation and attachment during Phase-in and beyond. We are prepared for the October slump, when the novelty has worn off and coming to school may not be so exciting any more. It is their job to dig in—to get busy, take risks, figure things out, make mistakes, fix them. And try again. We expect them to learn autonomy and the pleasure of mastery that accompanies that. They will learn what it means to be a good friend and to respect differences. They will develop the fortitude to persist in the face of challenge and celebrate accomplishments, theirs and others'. They will spend years discovering who they are as learners and as people.

Your job is to partner with us generously. Ours is to earn your trust. You can support our work with your children by doing your best to arrive on time in the morning, by letting us know when routines are different or behaviors seem unfamiliar. We will ask you to lend us your parental expertise because no one knows your child as intimately as you do. We welcome your questions and observations and we appreciate a respectful dialogue.

We can offer you our professional perspective, strategies to consider, and our empathy, keeping in mind that some strategies will work and some won't, or that something you tried once that *didn't* work now, magically, does the trick, and vice versa. We know this because we have seen many, many children and because some of us are parents as well. We will do our best to offer you support and counsel with compassion and humor.

Children are well served when their grown-ups at home and at school are consistent. They need us say what we mean and mean what we say. Being child centered

doesn't mean that children should be encouraged to do whatever they want, whenever they want. Or be allowed to wear us down through endless negotiating. We can offer simple choices and be clear whether what we are talking about it is a kid decision or a grown-up decision. Perhaps the single most helpful thing for us to remember is that children need to do what we ask, but it is unreasonable for us to expect them to always like it! As my pediatrician once said, "Children need parents. They really don't need us to be their tallest friends."

Research shows that the *Number 1* thing that children want (and need, if you read Kristof's article in the *New York Times* on October 20 entitled "Cuddle your Children") is their parents' time and affection. Our children know the difference between when we are moving *through* the busy-ness of life with them and when we are truly present. They are asking us to find a way to quiet the To-Do lists in our heads, to occasionally put aside the seductive lure of all things electronic, to just *be* together. Being present doesn't require special planning. In fact, it can be most rewarding when you are engaged in the stuff of everyday life: playing, walking, sharing a meal, snuggling, giving a bath or reading a bedtime story.

Truth be told, being present isn't always comfortable or natural at first. Our minds wander. Sometimes it feels boring. The hundredth tea party or superhero game has understandably lost its luster for us. But young children are still using their play to figure things out. Their plots still have twists and turns that fascinate and surprise them. Through their play, they reveal what they think and feel, wonder and worry about. Sometimes being present is just plain exhausting. Like any skill, it requires practice and there is fatigue in working a muscle that needs strengthening. For however long you are able to do it, it is worth the effort. You can rely on the fact that it is these moments that our children offer us glimpses into how they are making sense of the world. And perhaps most important, it is in these moments that *we* show them what it means to be intimately connected to another human being. Being present and setting boundaries are acquired skills, and we can practice together.

Many of you know that my son, Nicholas, now 21, is a Bank Street alum and is graduating from Wesleyan this May. Four years ago after settling him in to his dorm room for his freshman year at college, parents were gathered together to hear from the Dean of Students give a pep talk and then to be told that it was time for us to go. I want to share with you the story they shared with us:

One day a couple taking a walk in the woods came upon the silky cocoon of a butterfly hanging on an overhead branch. The butterfly was in the process of breaking free, so they stopped to watch its progress. They noticed the diligent work it took to push open even the tiniest of holes from which it would soon emerge. They stood and watched, as the butterfly struggled to force its body through that little hole. After a while, it seemed to stop making progress. They waited. It appeared as if the butterfly had gotten as far as it could and would go no further.

Distressed to see the butterfly struggling so, the couple decided to help. They took a twig and made the hole a little bigger- ensuring that the beautiful butterfly would have an easier time. Sure enough, that is just what happened. But once out, the butterfly appeared heavy and lethargic. After several minutes, the couple noticed that instead of expanding its wings and taking flight, its swollen body seemed too large and the colorful wings seemed small and shriveled.

What the couple did not understand in their haste and well-intentioned kindness, was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening was nature's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings. This process was necessary for the wings to grow strong enough to be ready for flight, once it had achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

In their desire to be helpful, they missed the fact that sometimes struggles are exactly what is needed. Without obstacles, we would not be as strong as we *could* have been, or might need to be. Without obstacles, we might not ever get the chance to fly.

Remarkably, one day and sooner than you can imagine, your children will be ready to leave Bank Street. They will all have learned how to read, write and compute, which says nothing of the kind of dynamic engagement, vision and thinking that will go along with that. And ultimately, we hope, they will be inspired to become change agents for good in the world they will inherit from us.

Whether or not we are ready to let them go, *they* will be prepared for whatever lies ahead. But our job will remain: lighting the way, while resisting the urge to poke around and make that hole bigger for them.

And having seen it myself many times before, I *know* they will have wings strong enough to fly.

When Good Ideas Flow Two Ways

By Mary Ellen Kenny, *Division Coordinator of the Middle School*

Bank Street College of Education is located just a stone's throw from the banks of the Hudson River. Hundreds of years ago, the Lenape people called the river Muhheakantuck, which, loosely translated, means, *great waters in constant motion*, or, *the river that flows two ways*. Much like the waters of the mighty river that inspires New Yorkers each day, the energy, expertise and ideas generated by educators at Bank Street, are in constant motion, flowing in two directions. Collaboration between the Graduate School and the School for Children continues to be a source of strength and vitality that serves as a model for the interactive process of teaching and learning. What follows is a summary of three projects that are joint ventures between Middle School teachers in the SFC and Graduate School faculty.

- While faculty in the SFC are fully engaged in teaching children, they also serve as mentors for assistant teachers, student teachers or interns, most of whom are enrolled in one of Bank Street College's graduate programs. In each classroom, a unique combination of teaching and learning is underway all the time. Recently, with the help of Joy Lundeen-Ellebbane, Director of Continuing Professional Studies, a full-day workshop was offered to teachers in the SFC. Adjunct instructor Nancy Klinger designed the workshop based on teacher input, in order to meet the specific needs of the group. Teachers spent a day together exploring the various components of mentoring. Topics of interest included: *stages of teacher development, building trusting collaborative relationships, strategies to support beginning teachers' growth and independence, and skills/knowledge/dispositions of the good mentor—What do mentors do? How do teachers learn?*

  Klinger provided readings and resources and the group shared stories, anecdotes and strategies, making for a lively exchange of information, experiences and new ideas.

- In the SFC, the social studies are at the hub of a rich, interdisciplinary curriculum. In age appropriate ways, students in the Middle School are all engaged in the process of understanding the relationships among people and their environments. How do people affect the environment? How does the environment affect people? The connections between science and social studies are tangible and an

important aspect of curriculum development.

During the 2012 - 2013 school year, a relationship was forged between middle school faculty in the SFC and Jenny Ingber, PhD., who is the Director of Science Programs in the Graduate School. The collaboration was designed to reinforce the connections between social studies and science, as well as to help clarify instructional goals for the faculty. Jenny was generous with her time, meeting with the Middle School faculty as a whole group and in smaller, age-level meetings as well. She has also worked directly with students, modeling lessons for the SFC faculty. Teachers appreciated the opportunities to brainstorm, strengthen their own scientific knowledge base, and to consider science teaching standards as they modify and extend the science curriculum. This collaborative effort will continue into the next school year, and is an excellent example of the ways in which the SFC takes advantage of its relationship with the Graduate School.

- Yet another joint project that is still evolving taps into one of the greatest resources at the College. Bank Street is home to a premier collection of children's literature. The creativity and voice of the authors represented in the collection serves as an inspiration to students and teachers alike. Through the combined efforts of the Center for Children's Literature, the Graduate Program and the School for Children, we are poised to embark on a Writer-in-Residence project. Through a series of workshops, an author of well-known children's literature will join classroom teachers to help children develop their writing. As one teacher put it, "The kids always have good ideas, but they need help in knowing how to go deeper". Additional inspiration will be gained by getting tips and encouragement from a respected author.

Developing the curiosity and engagement in learning that leads students to formulate thoughtful questions and to look for solutions is a hallmark of a Bank Street education. Providing students with meaningful experiences that encourage active investigation and inquiry in all avenues of learning is a primary mission. We are very fortunate to be part of a dynamic institution that values collaboration among educators from the various divisions of the college. We are energized and inspired when ideas are in constant motion—flowing two ways.

Loudness in the Library: *Empowering Students to Think Critically About Identity and Bias*

By Anshu Wahi, *Director of Diversity and Community*, **Allie Bruce**, *Children's Librarian*, **& Jamie Steinfeld**, *Upper School Teacher*

How It Began

This past fall, during an 11/12s booktalking session with Bank Street's Children's Librarian, a girl asked, "Why is there a bird on that cover, when every other cover you've shown us so far has a picture of the main character?" The book was about a Mexican girl; the other books discussed up until that point had centered on white characters. And the librarian had a good deal of experience and interest in the topic, and the knowledge that marginalized groups tend to be less represented or not represented accurately on covers and in content. So, a big question, with a complicated answer.

That 15-minute booktalking session turned into a two-hour conversation about book covers and the publishing industry, which in turn developed into a yearlong project on Identity facilitated by a collaboration between the Librarian (Allie), one of the 11/12s Humanities teachers (Jamie) and the Director of Diversity and Community (Anshu). Throughout the year, the 11/12s class visited the library weekly to discuss portrayals of race, gender, sexuality, body image, class, ability and other aspects of identity in covers and content. They then began to explore how to take action against the injustices they found especially troubling, all the while being reflective about their own identities. The project truly shed light on what it means to be a student and educator in a progressive school.

What It Looked Like

Week 1: Students worked with the librarian to explore the topic of identity. They viewed a slideshow of book covers and the messages those covers convey to readers about identity. Students took notes on their observations about each book. Then the class ended the week with a hour-plus-long discussion and analysis of the covers of many novels.

Week 2: Anshu worked with the class to discuss vocabulary and terms related to race, identity and diversity. Allie then presented the students with an assortment of books that did represent marginalized groups on their covers, ones that went against

the norm.

Week 3: The class looked at how books are marketed differently for boy and girl readers. Homework included looking for examples of books with strong girls on the cover.

Week 4: The class continued their discussion on gender stereotypes, extended the conversation to include into "gendered" advertisements and toys. Students learned of a girl who recently campaigned for gender neutral Easy Bake Ovens. Homework included taking a pledge to take one action to address gender inequality.

Week 5: Students looked at examples of how issues surrounding body image emerged in the books they read. Allie read some excerpts from popular books and the class analyzed how the characters were described and defined by their physical appearance – particularly their weight.

Week 6: Students read a quote by a beloved author regarding body image in literature, and were then read excerpts from books by that same author that contradicted her comments. Students broke into small groups to discuss critically the implications of this.

Week 7: Allie presented a lesson on banned books and read the students a children's book that was deemed controversial, as the main characters are samesex penguins and their baby. Students broke into small groups to discuss sexual orientation.

Week 8: Anshu led a conversation on the complexity of identity and various identifiers, as well as how and where those intersected. Students began to brainstorm topics relating to identity that they were interested in researching.

Week 9: The 11/12s class shared their project with the other 11/12s class. Each student shared a bit about what they had been learning and thinking about.

Week 10: Students went on a field trip to a large chain bookstore and took notes on ways various forms of identity were and were not represented in the children's section of the bookstore.

Week 11: Two editors from a major publishing house visited the class and showed examples of books they have published. Students asked very thoughtful questions such as, "Have you ever been surprised by how a cover turned out?" and "Why do covers always have such perfect-looking girls?"

Week 12: The class had a discussion about the nuances of confronting bias.

Weeks 13 - 22: Students prepped for their final Identity Project through discussion, research, activities, current events and reflection. The Project consisted of an essay entitled *This I Believe*, relating to a topic of identity each student researched, and Identity Boxes, which represented their outer (public) and inner (private) identities. The essays were very thoughtful and moving, and got to the heart of many issues of identity and stereotypes for many of the students. The project culminated with presentations and a celebration.

Week 23: Students shared their reflections on this pilot project. Some asked that

more identifiers be explored; others requested less time talking about books. Many stated that their views about books, advertising and products were changed, and that they enjoyed challenging stereotypes.

Progressive Education in Context

The ideals of progressive education infuse all aspects of this project. What emerged as an unplanned, informal discussion in our school library evolved into a year-long investigation; the interests and comments of the students drove the curriculum. Because we take children and their views seriously, Allie, Jamie and Anshu met weekly to reflect upon student learning and plan follow-up lessons. This collaboration proved so fruitful that the curriculum will be taught next year, and it will be presented at two national conferences.

At the heart of this project was a focus on social activism and justice. Students were encouraged to look at real world issues, to stand up and try to influence change, and to expand their senses of responsibility and selves. Understanding and exploration went deep, to the benefit of everyone who was involved.

The Last Word

By Shana Fletcher, *Bank Street School for Children – 2011, LREI (Little Red Elisabeth Irwin) – 2015*

Dear Bank Street,

Remember me? I'm Shana, and I'm on my way. Do you remember the first year I came here? I was just a half-black, half-white, quiet girl from Crown Heights, Brooklyn. I was shy and a little overwhelmed by all the new and different people, but I quickly made friends. Soon people were talking to me like I'd known them for years.

It didn't take long to begin to find my voice, starting in KOC [KOC is the Kids of Color affinity group for students of color], where I instantly felt comfortable speaking my mind about the problems in this huge world, surrounded by people who looked like me and who could understand where I was coming from. I remember one discussion when we talked about what it meant to be a Black or Hispanic person on the Upper West Side, and in America, too. I remember sharing my feelings on how I felt uncomfortable sometimes being mixed, and how I felt like I was judged sometimes in the outside world.

Eventually, my feelings of comfort and security within the whole Bank Street community grew, extending to everyone in my classroom and grade and the teachers. It wasn't so important that people looked like me anymore. Instead, it was enough that they all supported me, and we all cared about each other. I soon learned the true meaning of family, outside of home. In this new family, we started to go on trips together, and I soon enjoyed spending hours and hours a week at school.

This year, I couldn't have tried to slow the year down more. Every day—walking into the same lobby and breathing in new pictures to store away in more memory boxes—felt special. I met so many people this year, falling into deep conversations with teachers and classmates, learning so much about our collective diversity. I cracked my shell, branched out of my eight-year-old body, becoming strong and open. I have become one of the luckiest girls in the world. Thank you Bank Street. I will always keep you in my mind and heart. I will always love you.

Love,

Shana

P.S. When can I visit?

Bank Street
School for Children

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